

Message Text

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21

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 5594

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV CH

SUBJ: ERA OF TENG HSIAO-PING

SUMMARY: NOW PEKING'S FORMOST LEADERSHIP FIGURE, TENG

HSIAO-PING IS PUTTING HIS PRINT ON THE REIME'S POLICY AND

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STYLE WITH A LINE WHIC FEATURES COMESTIC STABILITY, ECONOMIC

CONSTRUCTION AND WORLD PEACE. END SUMMARY

1. AS ILLUSTRATED BY HIS HANDLING OF THE KIM IL-SUNG VISIT AND THE CONDUCT OF HIS OWN TRIP TO FRANCE NOW JUST CONCLUDED, TENG HSIAO-PING IS THE FOREMOST PUBLIC FIGURE IN THE PEKING LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENT, AND HE STANDS NEARER THE PINNACLE OF POWER THAN EVER BEFORE IN HIS FIFTY-YEAR POLITICAL CAREER. CONTRARY TO THE LACKLUSTER, CARETAKER IMAGE HE PRESENTED LAST YEAR, TENG'S ERA IN CHINESE POLITICS HAS ARRIVED, AND WHILE IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MUCH HE CAN ACCOMPLISH IN THE TIME AND VIGOR LEFT TO HIM, THE 71 YEAR-OLD VETERAN COMMUNIST LEADER IS PUTTING HIS MARK ON CURRENT REGIME POLICY AND STYLE. IT MAY BE AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION OF THE SITUATION IN CHINA, BUT WE ARE INCLINED LOOSELY TO IDENTIFY A CHINESE POLICY OF (A) DOMESTIC STABILITY, (B) WORLD PEACE, AND (C) ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION AS "THE TENGHSIAO-PING LINE".

2. EXPLICIT EVIDENCE OF TENG'S INFLUENCE ON POLICY STILL CENTERS ON HIS UNPUBLISHED SPEECH TO THE PARTY INNER CIRCLE IN JANUARY WHEN HE CRITICIZED THE REGIME'S LOSS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND POINTED OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF STABLE POLICIES IN REGAINING PUBLIC TRUST. THE NEED FOR "STABILITY OF POLICIES" HAS NOW BEEN SPOKEN OF APPROVINGLY IN RED FLAG, WHICH SUGGESTS A MORE OPEN ACCEPTANCE OF THIS ADVICE AND OF TENG'S ADVOCACY OF IT. REPORTS ABOUND OF HIS TAKING A PERSONAL HAND TO QUIET FACTIONAL UNREST COMING OUT OF LAST YEAR'S POLITICAL MOVEMENT. TENG HAS ALSO TAKEN THE LEAD IN ARTICULATING CHINA'S CORRELATIVE DESIRE FOR A LONG PERIOD OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY, A DESIRE NOTED EARLIER AS IMPLICIT IN THE NEW ORIENTATION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNVEILED AT THE JANUARY CONGRESS. TENG SPOKE OF CHINA'S NEED FOR PEACE IN HIS MEETING WITH CONGRESSMAN ALBERT AND RHODES IN APRIL AND WENT ON TO RAISE IT PUBLICLY IN HIS OPENING REMARKS IN PARIS IN MAY WHEN HE SAID CHINA WANTS A "RELATIVELY FAVORABLE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT SO THAT WE CAN CARRY ON OUR CONSTRUCTIONS".

3. FROM WHAT IS KNOWN HERE, TENG A YEAR AGO STEPPED INTO CHOU'S SHOES IN OVERSEEING THE COURSE OF SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. EARLY IN HIS MOVE TO TAKE OVER FROM THE AILING, RETIRING PREMIER, TENG TOOK ON THE PRINCIPAL ROLE IN SINO-CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICAN TALKS WHEN HE MET WITH THE SECRETARY AT THE UN IN APRIL 1974. TENG'S RECENT REMARKS IN PARIS ABOUT THE US HAVING BEEN OVEREXTENDED IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, CONSISTENT WITH THE LINE HE HAS TAKEN SINCE AT LEAST LAST YEAR, AND HIS ASSERTION THAT THE US IS STRONGER RATHER THAN WEAKER NOW AND CAN CONCENTRATE ON IMPORTANT AREAS OF COMMITMENT, IDENTIFY HIM WITH THE CURRENT CHINESE PRIVATE LINE ON THE US.

4. TENG'S PERSONALITY AND STYLE ARE ALSO BEGINNING TO EMERGE, THUS FAR MAINLY FOR FOREIGN EYES. HIS APPARENT TOP-OF-THE-HEAD REPLY TO NEWSMEN IN PARIS, THAT IF THE US USED FORCE IN THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR WITH CAMBODIA THERE WAS NOTHING CHINA COULD DO, CONVEYED CONFIDENCE AND CANDOR, BUT MAY ALSO HAVE FORETOLD AN INSTINCT FOR USING THE FOREIGN PRESS. THE POSE HE STRUCK FOR FOREIGN PHOTOGRAPHERS ON HIS RETURN HOME FURTHER SUGGESTS THIS. IN AN UNUSUAL GESTURE, TENG'S WIFE HAD BROUGHT THE FAMILY TO THE AIRPORT, AND IN A DISPLAY OF INTIMATE FEELINGS NOT SO RECORDED AMONG CHINESE LEADERS FOR A DECADE, TENG SCOOPED UP HIS YOUNGEST GRANDCHILD AND HELD HER FOR THE CAMERAS. IT WAS AN AVUNCULAR STANCE THAT SERVED TO UNDERSCORE THE PEACE AND DOMESTIC CONCERNS HE HAS PROJECTED IN HIS PARIS REMARKS.

5. TENG HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE HE REENTERED PUBLIC LIFE. FROM THE NUMBER TWO RANKING VICTIM OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, OUT OF SIGHT AND UNMENTIONED FOR SIX YEARS, WHO RETURNED TO OFFICE AS A VICE PREMIER IN 1973, HE HAS STEADILY AND SWIFTLY WORKED HIS WAY BACK TO THE TOP. BUT HE HAS REALLY BLOOMED JUST THIS YEAR, WHEN IN A RUSH OF PROMOTIONS AT THE PARTY PLENUM AND NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS IN JANUARY, HE WAS RAISED TO VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY, CONFIRMED AS FIRST VICE PREMIER OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND NAMED CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF OF THE MILITARY. DURING THE VISIT HE HAS JUST COMPLETED TO FRANCE, TENG WAS TREATED LIKE A HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, AND HE APPARENTLY ACCEPTED THIS AND PLAYED THE ROLE.

6. TENG'S PARTY, GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY POSITIONS SUGGEST A WIDE DOMESTIC BASE OF ACCEPTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR HIM AND PUT HIM AHEAD OF HIS NEAREST RIVAL, SHANGHAI CHIEF AND LEADING LEFTIST SPOKESMAN CHANG CHUN-CHIAO, WHO FOLLOWS JUST BEHIND

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TENG IN THESE THREE HIERARCHIES. IT SEEMS LIKELY THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE WEB OF CHECK AND BALANCES IN WHICH THESE TWO ARE CAUGHT. THERE IS ALMOST CERTAINLY A DISTANCE IF NOT BAD BLOOD BETWEEN THE TWO STEMMING FROM TENG'S HUMILIATION IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, AND THEY HAVE BEEN ON OPPOSITE SIDES IN REGIME POLITICS FOR EVEN LONGER. THEIR RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE UNEASY AND CONTENTIOUS, DESPITE THE MODERATE AND DEFENSIVE STANCE CHANG HAS ADAPTED IN RECENT MONTHS. CHANG, HOWEVER, IS SEVERAL YEARS YOUNGER, AND HIS CHANCES FOR A SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGE TO TENG, VERY POOR NOW, COULD IMPROVE WITH TIME. TENG, TOO, MAY BE HOLDING BACK ON FULL ASSERTING HIMSELF, BIDDING HIS TIME WHILE MAO AND CHOU ARE STILL AROUND AND THE LATTER IN PARTICULAR IS STILL A FORCE TO BE RECONCILED WITH.

7. APART FROM THESE PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TIME FACTORS, BOTH TENG AND CHANG ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THE COUNTRY'S NEED FOR STABILITY AND UNITY, AND THEY MAY PUT THIS AHEAD OF THEIR PERSONAL RIVALRY--- A LEAST WHERE IT SHOWS. THIS COULD GIVE CHANG , WHO TURNED OUT TO SEND PENG OFF AND WELCOME HIM BACK FROM PARIS, ADDED AND, WITHIN HIS LEFTIST CAMP, FACE-SAVING REASON FOR COOPERATING WITH THE FORMER ARCH REVISIONIST ENEMY, WHILE TENG WORKS TO STEER A STABILIZING COURSE THROUGH THE TWILIGHT PERIOD OF THE MAO-CHOU ERA.
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